

REMARKS

Claims 9-15 were withdrawn from consideration on the merits pursuant to a restriction requirement, and have been canceled. Claims 1-5, 7, 16, 20-21 and 23-25 have been amended. Claims 1-8 and 16-25 are present in the application. In view of the foregoing amendments, and the remarks that follow, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Independent Claim 16

Independent Claim 16 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as anticipated by newly-cited Kazuyasu Japanese Reference No. 6-244405. However, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 16 is distinct from Kazuyasu. Claim 16 recites that:

. . . each said corner portion of said seal ring has approximately straight first and second edges on inner and outer sides thereof that are approximately parallel to each other, and that are sloped at an angle to each of two said edge portions located adjacent that corner portion, so each said corner portion is free of a sharp corner.

The copy of Kazuyasu provided by the Examiner included a computer-generated English translation of Kazuyasu. With reference to this English translation, Kazuyasu takes the position that corner portions should be rounded. In fact, the focus of Kazuyasu's invention relates to minimizing the radius of curvature for rounded corners while simultaneously avoiding electric field problems. As a result, Kazuyasu does not disclose anything comparable to the corner portions recited in the above-quoted limitation from Claim 16, where each "corner portion of said seal ring has approximately straight first and second edges on inner and outer sides thereof that are approximately parallel to each other, and that are sloped at an angle to each of two said edge portions located adjacent that corner portion". Kazuyasu thus fails to disclose each and every

element recited in Claim 16, and therefore does not anticipate Claim 16 under §102. Consequently, Claim 16 is believed to be allowable over Kazuyasu, and notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Independent Claim 1

Independent Claim 1 calls for:

... each said corner portion of said seal ring having approximately straight first and second edges on inner and outer sides thereof that are approximately parallel to each other, and that are sloped at an angle to each of two said edge portions located adjacent that corner portion, so each said corner portion is free of a sharp corner.

Independent Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 USC §103 on the ground that it would be obvious over Kazuyasu, considered in light of Towle U.S. Patent No. 6,806,168. However, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 is distinct from Kazuyasu and Towle. In this regard, the PTO specifies in MPEP §2142 that:

The examiner bears the initial burden of factually supporting any *prima facie* conclusion of obviousness. If the examiner does not produce a *prima facie* case, the applicant is under no obligation to submit evidence of nonobviousness.

Applicants respectfully submit that Kazuyasu and Towle fail to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness under §103 with respect to Claim 1. As discussed above in association with Claim 16, Kazuyasu's invention relates to minimizing the radius of curvature for rounded

corners, while simultaneously avoiding electric field problems. As a result, Kazuyasu does not disclose anything comparable to the corner portions recited in the above-quoted limitation from Claim 1, where each "corner portion of said seal ring has approximately straight first and second edges on inner and outer sides thereof that are approximately parallel to each other, and that are sloped at an angle to each of two said edge portions located adjacent that corner portion".

Applicants also respectfully submit that it would not be obvious in view of Towle to modify Kazuyasu's corner structure so that it is comparable to the corner portions recited in Claim 1. Kazuyasu teaches, for example in paragraph [0003], that non-rounded corner portions are not desirable. If Kazuyasu's device were modified so that the corner portions were non-rounded, it would run directly contrary to Kazuyasu's teachings that corner portions should be rounded, and the fact that Kazuyasu's invention is specifically intended for use with rounded corner portions. Consequently, even if Kazuyasu is considered in light of Towle, it would not be obvious to change the structure of Kazuyasu's corner portions so that they are non-rounded. It is therefore respectfully submitted that Claim 1 is not rendered obvious under §103 by Kazuyasu, even when considered in light of Towle, and notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Dependent Claims

Claims 2-8 and Claims 17-25 respectively depend from Claim 1 and Claim 16, and are also believed to be distinct from the art of record, for example for the same reasons discussed above with respect to Claims 1 and 16, respectively.

Conclusion

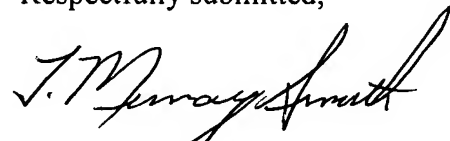
Based on the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all of the pending claims are fully allowable, and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that examination of the present application may be advanced in any way

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by a telephone conference, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney at 972-739-8647.

Respectfully submitted,



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